

Province; action which I cannot but regard with the utmost alarm, as being calculated, if persisted in, to lead to a revolution in this part of Her Majesty's dominions. Indeed, I am warranted in saying, that so strong is the feeling which has been excited among all classes of Her Majesty's subjects throughout the Province, that, but for my own personal influence to the contrary, steps would, ere now have been taken, which, in all probability, would have forcibly severed the tie which now binds us to the Colony.

The circumstances which have led to this state of things are as follows:—

Under the Gold Fields Act of the Colony, certain Executive functions are vested in His Excellency the Governor, the intention being that they were to be delegated to the Superintendent and Provincial Council of the respective Provinces, within which Gold Fields might be proclaimed, accordingly these powers have hitherto been delegated to the Superintendent of this Province, and by him exercised with the advice and consent of his Responsible Advisers, as provided by "The Executive Council Ordinance, 1862." These Responsible Advisers consist of six members of the Provincial Council, who must needs possess the confidence of that body.

The Superintendent, you are probably aware, is elected by the whole body of the people for four years, and the Provincial Council, comprising thirty-eight members, is elected by the various districts throughout the Province: the proportion of those who represent Gold Fields Districts may be stated at one-sixth of the whole.

In the month of January last, the Superintendent and Provincial Council of Otago were dissolved under a proclamation by His Excellency Sir George Grey, and a new Superintendent and Provincial Council have been elected. I may state that this election has elicited a greater interest on the part of the people of this Province, in their political rights and privileges, than has been exhibited at any previous election in this country, and that the newly elected Superintendent and Council are, in reality, the exponent of the vigorous and intelligent will of the people, elected expressly to make laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Province, and to administer its affairs in terms of the powers conferred by the Constitution Act.

The first act of His Excellency's Advisers at Wellington has been to withhold the delegated powers under the Gold Fields Act from the Superintendent of the Province, which means, in point of fact, the Superintendent and Provincial Council, inasmuch as the former is restrained from acting on his own responsibility, and must do so with the advice and consent of the latter. Instead of the administration of the Gold Fields being conferred upon the Provincial Government, as heretofore, it has been placed in the hands of a General Government Agent, who is neither appointed by nor responsible to the people.

As the proclaimed Gold Fields of Otago comprise about two-thirds of the whole area of the Province, and their interests are ramified and mixed up with every interest in the Province, it is manifest that the practical effect of this step on the part of His Excellency's Advisers will be to cripple and destroy the Provincial Legislature, and to land the Province in inextricable confusion; as it is the Provincial authorities have determined to resist the encroachment. The effect of the policy sought to be enforced by His Excellency's Advisers will, if persisted in, be to drive the people to separate themselves from the rest of the Colony, a result which, I feel assured, would never be forced upon them were the Imperial authorities consulted, and which personally I should greatly deplore.

In the interests of the Empire, as well as of this small but true and loyal portion thereof, I venture to solicit your good offices with the Imperial authorities to the intent that they may be pleased to issue such instructions to His Excellency the Governor as may induce him to comply with what he cannot but know to be the almost unanimous desire of the people of this Province, and thereby to maintain the integrity of the Colony upon the best of all foundations, viz., the allegiance of a free and independent people.

I have, &c.,  
JAMES MACANDREW,  
Superintendent.

To Major-General Chute, Auckland.

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#### No. 29.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to the SUPERINTENDENT, Otago.

(248.)

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 18th May, 1867.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Honor's letter No. 7386-7, of the 10th instant, enclosing the copy of a letter which you had addressed to Major-General Chute.

His Honor the Superintendent, Otago.

I have, &c.,  
E. W. STAFFORD.

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#### No. 30.

Copy of a Letter from the Hon. E. W. STAFFORD to the SUPERINTENDENT, Otago.

SIR,—

Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 17th May, 1867.

(246.)

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Honor's letters No. 7386-4, of the 20th, and No. 7386-5, of the 27th ultimo respectively, on the subject of the transfer of the documents in connection with the Gold Fields, in the Province of Otago, to the General Government, in whom the administration of those Gold Fields has vested since the 28th of February last, and I have to apologize for the delay which has occurred in replying to them.

Your Honor assigns as a reason for not transferring these documents that a previous arrangement should be made for repaying to the Province the cost of its outlay in creating the materials of the Gold Fields Department. On this point I would observe that the object of the Gold Fields